

September 10, 1974.

Features Editor
Boulder Daily Camera
P.O. Box 591
Boulder, Colorado 80302

Dear Sir:

Enclosed are a couple of movie reviews, one of a movie now playing in Boulder and one which will be playing shortly. I'm offering them for publication, but also as a sort of advertisement; I think the city paper could use occasional movie reviews, both for the amusement of the paper's readers and as a thumbnail guide for area moviegoers--not that any of them are obligated to accept what I write, and most won't.

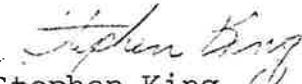
It seems to me that the local touch is important in reviewing, and above all, the reviews themselves must be entertaining. I agree with Judith Crist, who says she would rather watch a dull movie twice than read a dull critic once. I would hope to review lightly, sometimes with my tongue tucked firmly into my cheek, and provide that entertainment.

My own qualifications: I'm a professional writer (novelist contracting at present with Doubleday and Company with a book called CARRIE out in hardcover now and a second novel, JERUSALEM'S LOT, slated for publication next summer). I'm originally from Maine, attended the University of Maine, and reviewed movies and TV for the campus newspaper there. More important, I love the movies. I don't want to write snotty avant-garde reviews of obscure foreign films, but I would like the chance to shake down what's playing at the Boulder or the Fox or the Basemar Twin Cinemas once or twice a week.

I hope you're interested, and if you are you can contact me at the address below or at 499-5280. And by the way, I work cheap.

Thanks for your time.

Sincerely,


Stephen King
330 South 42nd Street
Boulder, Colorado
80303

CALIFORNIA SPLIT

Starring George Segal, Elliot Gould

Directed by Robert Altman

Columbia

Robert Altman is a smart director who has made an amazing succession of stupid movies since MASH, his masterpiece. Brewster McCloud was a stupid movie of the French new-wave surrealistic type. McCabe and Mrs. Miller was perhaps the stupidest western since Dean Martin in Four for Texas. Thieves Like Us was Altman's Bonnie-and-Clyde venture, done in Altman's usual inimitable stupid style. Now Altman has made a stupid gambling picture, and it just may end up being a big stupid hit--something Altman hasn't had since MASH and something he still doesn't deserve.

To be mercifully brief, George Segal is a compulsive gambler who meets Elliot Gould at a Los Angeles poker parlor. While Segal is a worried compulsive gambler, Gould is a cheery compulsive gambler. Get it? And so the two of them wander through the rest of the movie doing a foggy sort of Newman-Redford bit, visiting race tracks, more poker parlors, and finally a Las Vegas poker back room (as opposed to parlor, you see) where Segal gambles worriedly and Gould kibbitzes cheerfully. I could tell you whether or not Segal breaks the bank, but are you sure you really care?

During the course of this endless two hour movie, Segal and Gould make sport of a sad and ageing transvestite, Segal is threatened by his friendly neighborhood loan shark (he takes it well; worried, but well), and Gould punches out another gambler in a race-track men's room. If all this is your cup of tea, go ahead. But it would really be more exciting to stay home and get up a penny-ante game of your own.

BRING ME THE HEAD OF ALFREDO GARCIA
Starring Warren Oates
Directed by Sam Peckinpah
United Artists

One New York film critic has suggested that moviegoers leaving the theater after seeing Alfredo Garcia might well mutter, "Bring me the head of Sam Peckinpah." It's cute, but not really fair. Sam Peckinpah is one of America's great directors, and while Alfredo Garcia may not be his best film, it's still better than most of the stuff making the rounds this fall.

Peckinpah has been labelled as a violence-loving director ever since The Wild Bunch and Straw Dogs, and Garcia is as violent as the rest. As Warren Oates remarks at one point, "Sixteen people have died over this head. That's too many." But not too many for Sam Peckinpah, apparently, and his strongest critics tend to forget that he is working in a time and place (the American west, usually around the turn of the century) that was extremely violent-- and it is in violent confrontation that most human values show up the most clearly.

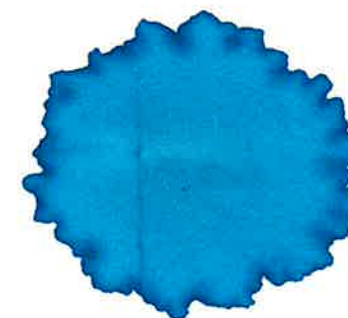
Garcia is set in modern-day Mexico, although the viewer keeps forgetting it in spite of the oil-belching '62 Chevy. Warren Oates drives as he hunts for the unfortunate Alfredo's head. A sudden cut to the bad guys landing in a jet at Mexico City comes as a distinct shock.

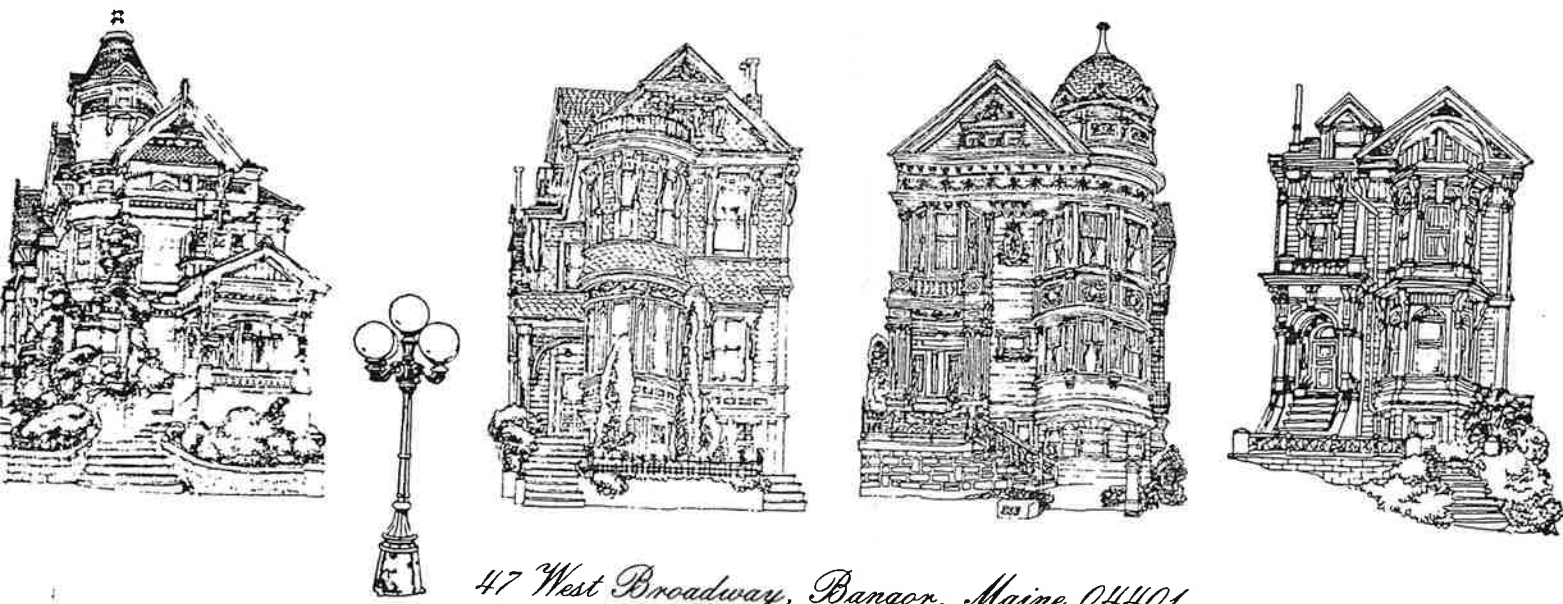
Warren Oates plays a down-and-out piano player who knows, by way of his girlfriend, where Alfredo is...or where his body is, anyway. A Mexican landowner has promised a million dollars to whoever will bring him the head of Garcia, who has skipped town leaving the daughter of this Mexican Howard Hughes in the family way. Oates and his girlfriend not only know Garcia is dead, they know where his body is. ^{They head out,} Packing a large machete to do the necessary surgery. With the baddies only three car-lengths behind, of course.

What follows includes at least four shoot-outs, a rape, an assault on a prostitute, fist-fights beyond number, and a final bullet-riddled climax. All of which might have amounted to so much cheap exploitation in the hands of a lesser director, but under Peckinpah's sure hand, Alfredo Garcia becomes a merciless dissection of human greed, a black comedy where Oates ends up stuffing dry ice into the bag which contains Garcia's head and plonking it in his shower to keep it fresh. A film not completely unworthy of

Alfredo Garcia--2

The Treasure of the Sierra Madre, which it greatly resembles. And Warren Oates is a fine actor; with the dark shades he wears throughout most of the movie, the beard stubble, and the endlessly dangling cigarette, damned if he won't make you think of Humphrey Bogart.





47 West Broadway, Bangor, Maine 04401

August 8, 1988

Ms. Margaret Suh
The Boulder Daily Camera
1048 Pearl Street
Boulder, Colorado 80303

Dear Ms. Suh,

I'm sorry this reply to your letter is so late--the forwarding from my agent's was very slow. I am also delighted that the Camera was able to get onto that dirty bird Annie Wilkes. In answer to your first question, you have to remember that Annie didn't go crazy in Boulder; she had been knocking off patients in hospitals all across the country. She simply got caught in Boulder (well... almost).

Anyway, I know the Boulder area, because my wife and family and I spent a happy year living on 42nd Street, in the Table Mesa area. The reason Paul Sheldon chose to finish all his books at the Boulderado is because that's the place I'd go to finish mine, if I were a man in his position (divorced, no kids)...or maybe the Stanley, in Estes Park, although the views from the Stanley are maybe a little too spectacular for complete concentration.

Do these replies help? I hope so.

Best wishes,
Stephen King
Stephen King